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TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PBTS](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: NEW HAR HOMA/JEBEL ABU GHNEIM TENDER RENDERS
STRONG NEGATIVE REACTION BY PALESTINIANS

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: Following the GOI's December 2 publication of a new tender for 307 housing units at Har Homa/Jebel Abu Ghneim, Palestinians publicly and privately condemned the action and urged the USG to act quickly to reverse it. On December 5, PolOff visited the site to confirm its location at the edge of numerous ongoing construction projects and observed vigorous construction activity. END SUMMARY

Strong Negative Palestinian Reaction

12. (C) Following the December 2 Israel Land Administration (ILA) publication of a new tender for 307 housing units in the East Jerusalem neighborhood of Har Homa/Jebel Abu Ghneim, Post has heard serious concerns from all Palestinian interlocutors. Many have underscored that the decision prompts them to question GOI seriousness about permanent status negotiations. In a December 3 meeting with the Consul General, PA President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) and PLO Chief Negotiator Sa'eb Erekat urged the USG to react strongly and quickly in order to secure a reversal of this move by the GOI. Erekat noted that the timing, just days after Annapolis, embarrasses Abu Mazen and urged the USG to judge carefully this action, which he said violates GOI Roadmap commitments. In a December 4 letter to the Secretary and other senior international leaders, Erekat wrote that the tenders "serve to undermine the credibility of all parties" and "effectively render the freeze meaningless." His letter also urged the United States, as "the agreed judge in this process", to take action. (Full text of letter emailed to S staff and NEA).

On the Ground: 20 Contractors, 12 Cranes

13. (C) According to maps provided by Jerusalem lawyer Danny Seideman, the new tender, known as "Plan 7905," lies on five separate plots at the eastern edge of Har Homa/Jebel Abu Ghneim, across from the Palestinian village of Um Tuba. In a December 5 visit, PolOff observed that the area, known as Homat Shmuel, is a barren hillside neighboring a number of active construction sites on the outer ring road of Har Homa/Jebel Abu Ghneim. PolOff observed some twenty different contractors working on projects at various stages of completion and counted twelve cranes at Homat Shmuel.

14. (C) Contractors on site told PolOff that the GOI can provide plan 7905, which would indicate the specific location of the tender. According to the tender announcement, the Israeli Lands Authority (ILA) will establish a hotline December 9 to provide information to interested contractors and will also provide contractors a tour of the area January 11.

15. (C) Comment: The original construction at Har Homa/Jebel Abu Ghneim in the late 90's sparked clashes between Israelis and Palestinians and disrupted negotiations between the two sides. These additional 307 housing units do not significantly impact the face of Har Homa/Jebel Abu Ghneim, which is already densely populated and the site of much ongoing construction activity. However, the issuance of these tenders and GOI statements about it - in the week after Annapolis and the week before negotiations are scheduled to begin - has upset Palestinian contacts and prompted them to question Israeli seriousness about addressing Jerusalem and other permanent status issues. End Comment.

WALLES